NAXOS

Xiaogang YE

Mount E'mei

Scent of Green Mango

Lamura Cuo

The Silence of Mount Minshan

Wei Lu, Dan Zhu, Violin
Shengnan Hu, Percussion
Xiaotang Tan, Piano

Royal Scottish National Orchestra
Gilbert Varga

Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz
Stefan Malzew
Franck Ollu

Xiaogang Ye (b. 1955)

Mount E'mei · Scent of Green Mango · Lamura Cuo · The Silence of Mount Minshan

Born in Shanghai in 1955, Xiaogang Ye is regarded as one of China's leading contemporary composers. From 1978 until 1983, he studied at the composition department of the Central Conservatory of Music in China, and after graduation was appointed resident composer and lecturer at the Conservatory. From 1987, he studied at the Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester in New York. His former teachers include Mingxin Du, Samuel Adler, Joseph Schwantner, Louis Andriessen and Alexander Goehr. After he returned home from the US in 1994, Xiaogang Ye served as a professor in the composition department of the Central Conservatory of Music, a doctoral advisor, the Deputy Dean of the composition department and Educational Inspector of the Conservatory. From 2009 to 2018 he worked as one of four vice presidents of the Central Conservatory of Music.

Ye is entrusted with cultural tasks as a standing member of the 13th Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and he is presently vice chairman of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, chairman of the China Musicians Association, vice chairman of the International Music Council, head of the ISCM (International Society for Contemporary Music) Beijing Modern Music Festival Section, professor of composition at the Central Conservatory of Music, distinguished professor of the Xinghai Conservatory of Music and Shanghai Conservatory of Music, honorary professor of the Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music, international chair in composition at the Royal Northern College of Music, a consultant to The Tianjin Juilliard School, and an international honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Ye is the founder and artistic director of the Beijing Modern Music Festival, Shenzhen Belt & Road International Music Festival, Tsingtao International Music Festival, Guangdong-Hongkong-Macau Dawan District Music Festival and the International Music Competition Harbin. Ye has been committed to promoting the development of China's modern music, and the exchange of Chinese and foreign music cultures.

Ye has composed a large number of works in a variety of genres, including symphonic, chamber, dance drama and opera pieces, as well as film and TV music. His important works include *Horizon*, *The Last Paradise*, *The Song of the Earth*, *Twilight of the Himalayas*, *Scent of Green Mango*, *Mount E'mei*, *Lamura Cuo*, *Symphony No. 4 'Songs from the Steppe'*, *Symphony No. 5 'Lu Xun'*, *Symphony No. 7 'The Heroes'*, *The Backyard of the Village*, *Cantonese Suite*, *Springs in the Forest*, *Nine Horses*, *Yangzhuoyong Cuo*, *The Macau Bride* and *Song of Farewell*. Ye is also a successful composer of film music. He has composed for more than 30 important Chinese movies and TV series, and has won the Golden Rooster Award three times as well as two other prestigious film score awards for his efforts in this area. Although Ye does not consider film music central to his output, it has granted his work unprecedented exposure in China, leading to him being granted the honorary title of 'Man of China' in 2005. Since 1995, the world-renowned publisher Schott has published and served as an agent for Ye's works.

Ye's music can be heard throughout the world in leading opera houses and symphony halls, international festivals, and on radio and television. Since 1987, Ye's works have drawn attention both in East Asia and in the West, where they have been performed by major orchestras and ensembles including the New York Philharmonic, The Cleveland Orchestra, The Philadelphia Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Münchner Philharmoniker, Bamberger Symphoniker, Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Hamburg, Orchestra del Teatro alla Scala, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, Macao Orchestra, Taiwan Symphony Orchestra, China Philharmonic Orchestra, China National Symphony Orchestra, Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble Modern, Ensemble Utopik, New European Ensemble, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and the NZTrio. In August 2008, his piano concerto *Starry Sky* was premiered during the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in Beijing by Lang Lang. Accompanied by dance and light shows, the live broadcast was watched by three billion people worldwide.

Beginning in 2013, the *China Story* concert series featuring Ye's music has been presented in venues all over the world, including in Avery Fisher Hall at the Lincoln Center in New York, and in the National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing. Other concerts have been held in Saarbrücken, Munich, Berlin, San José (Costa Rica), Kolkata, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Moscow, Nantes, Lima, Dublin and Bydgoszcz. Orchestras that have participated in the series include the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, China National Symphony Orchestra, China NCPA Orchestra, Deutsche Radio Philharmonie Saarbrücken Kaiserslautern, National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Russian National Orchestra, Ensemble Utopik, National Symphony Orchestra of Peru, and the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra. This concert series has introduced Ye's music to diverse international audiences.

Ye has been the recipient of many prestigious honours including a 2012 Guggenheim Fellowship, a 2013 China Arts Award, and a Distinguished Alumni citation from the Eastman School of Music in 2011. Recordings of Ye's music can be found on several international labels, including EMI Classics, Wergo, Hugo, Naxos, BIS and Delos among others.

Max Yin

Mount E'mei for Violin, Percussion and Orchestra, Op. 74 (2015–16)

This work was co-commissioned by the Beijing Symphony Orchestra and Sichuan Philharmonic Orchestra. It was premiered in Beijing in October 2016 as a part of *Sichuan Tone Picture*. The piece *Sichuan Image* had previously been performed by the Sichuan Philharmonic Orchestra, and was highly acclaimed. As that work's companion volume, *Sichuan Tone Picture* presents the humanistic sentiments, folk customs, and modernised scenery of Sichuan province from another perspective. Mount E'mei is an important geographical landscape within Sichuan. For thousands of years it has been a famous cultural mountain, and a sacred Buddhist site. It is famed as the 'most beautiful mountain in the world' for its precipitous landscape and steep cliffs. It has subsequently attracted countless tourists from all over the world. In order to write this work, the composer travelled through almost the entirety of Sichuan, and it took him one year to compose and revise the work.

Mount E'mei is an important birthplace of Chinese civilisation. This work describes and eulogises the great spectacle of the mountain, and reveals its hidden human connections and deeply rooted history through the use of the violin's evocative melodies and percussive highlighting. If the solo violin introduces the 'quiet side' of the concerto with its long, sustained note, held like a breath, then the solo percussion endows it with another 'moving side' through rich rhythms and varied colours. They respectively depict the work's static and dynamic artistic conception. Meanwhile, the composer uses many Chinese musical instruments and harmony changes to enable the sounds to create a multi-dimensional picture. Through this, an amazing and fantastic auditory experience is delivered to the audience.

Scent of Green Mango for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 42 (1998–2014)

Scent of Green Mango is taken from the series of works named after Asian tropical plants by Xiaogang Ye. This work was conceived in 1998, but not finished until 2014. The other works from the same series include *Enchanted Bamboo*, *Hibiscus*, *Datura*, *The Silence of White Poppy* and *Gardenia*. In *Scent of Green Mango*, the composer displays the sensitivity, particularity and complexity of the heart of a musician of Southern Chinese origin. The work also reveals the composer's preference for the comparison of shadow and colour, and his gratitude to nature for granting human beings the refreshing fragrance of the title.

Lamura Cuo for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 69b (2014)

Lamura Cuo for Violin and Ensemble was commissioned in 2014 by Soundstreams, a Toronto-based music presenter of contemporary music in Canada. This is one of a series of works by the composer about the 'Nine Sacred Lakes in Tibet'. In this composition, a melodious and mystic strain played on violin is used to depict the sacredness of Lake Lamura Cuo, situated on the highest plateau in the world, as felt in the heart of the composer. The chilly but clear air and the quiet lake water in the distance stir up deep emotions within the composer.

The Silence of Mount Minshan for Strings, Op. 73 (2015)

The Silence of Mount Minshan is among one of the pieces found within Ye's Sichuan series. Mount Minshan, a fold mountain in Sichuan, winds more than 700 kilometres from north to south, thus goes the saying, the 'thousand miles of Mount Minshan'.

Mount Minshan is paramount within the provenance of the Shu civilisation. Wang Xizhi, one of the greatest calligraphers in Chinese history, described Mount Minshan, saying 'There are frost and snows in the summer, and Mount Minshan is almost the same as Mount Kunlun.' With this piece, the composer describes the beauty of the quiet and silence of the great Mount Minshan in the frost and snows, as felt within the composer's heart.

Xiaogang Ye
English translation: Max Yin

Wei Lu

Wei Lu is concertmaster of the Deutsche Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, professor at the Xinghai Conservatory of Music and founder of the European-Chinese Festival Orchestra. He was the first violin scholar of the Anne-Sophie Mutter Foundation, and since 2009 has frequently performed with her around the world as a soloist and chamber musician. Lu has been invited to appear as guest concertmaster of the Berliner Philharmoniker, London Symphony Orchestra, Gewandhaus Orchester Leipzig and Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, among other world class orchestras and opera houses. He has performed as a soloist at prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall, Musikverein Wien and the Philharmonie Berlin.

Dan Zhu

Since his Carnegie Hall debut at the age of 18, Dan Zhu has appeared as a soloist with the major orchestras of Boston, Florence, Hong Kong, Munich, Paris, Philadelphia, Tokyo and Vienna, under the direction of Christoph Eschenbach, Zubin Mehta, Krzysztof Penderecki and Long Yu, among others. He has given concerts and master classes at renowned festivals including Enescu, Marlboro, Prades-Casals, Schleswig-Holstein, Salzburg Festspiele, Tanglewood and Verbier. His passion for nature and the environment has led him to become the first classical musician to perform in Antarctica. He founded Festival Etruscan Bloom in Florence in 2021. www.danzhumusic.com

Shengnan Hu

A Gold Prize winner of the Hummel International Percussion Competition, Chinese multi-percussionist Shengnan Hu studied in Beijing, Graz, Salzburg and Berlin. She has performed as a soloist with the Deutsche Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Singapore Symphony Orchestra, China Philharmonic Orchestra and China National Symphony Orchestra under the baton of conductors such as Muhai Tang, Lan Shui, Long Yu, Tan Dun, Gilbert Varga, Johannes Wildner and Howard Griffiths. Hu is a regular guest of Beijing Music Festival, Shanghai Spring International Music Festival, Beijing Modern Music Festival, Young Euro Classic, Berlin and Kissingen Sommer. She has been a professor at the Xinghai Conservatory of Music since 2018.

www.shengnanhu.com

Xiaotang Tan

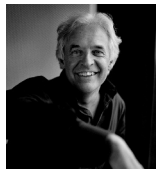
Xiaotang Tan is a professor at the Central Conservatory of Music, Beijing, from where he graduated before studying at the École Normale de Musique de Paris and the Hochschule für Musik und Theater München. He has won numerous top awards at major piano competitions, such as the Chinese Golden Bell Award for Music, the Sendai International Music Competition and the Grand Prix Animato 2005 Rencontre Internationale Des Jeunes Pianistes in Paris. Tan has worked with prestigious international orchestras, as well as eminent artists, and performs at major music events around the world.

Royal Scottish National Orchestra

Formed in 1891, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO) is one of Europe's leading symphony orchestras. Many renowned conductors have contributed to its success, including Sir John Barbirolli, Sir Alexander Gibson and Neeme Järvi. Thomas Søndergård has been the orchestra's music director since 2018. The RSNO performs across Scotland and appears regularly at the Edinburgh International Festival and the BBC Proms in addition to international tours. With a widely acclaimed discography, the RSNO has previously appeared on BIS in a cycle of Rachmaninov's symphonies as well as in programmes of music by James MacMillan, Ge Gan-ru and Sally Beamish.

www.rsno.org.uk

Gilbert Varga



Gilbert Varga, son of the celebrated Hungarian violinist Tibor Varga, has led a long and distinguished career across the globe, conducting orchestras such as the Oslo and Munich Philharmonics, Berlin Radio and Sydney Symphony Orchestras, The Philadelphia Orchestra and the Orchestre de Paris among many others. He has held several titled positions, including that of chief conductor of the Basque National Orchestra (1997 to 2008) and principal conductor of the Taipei Symphony Orchestra (2013 to 2018). In 2019 he took up the post of chief conductor with the Pannon Philharmonic Orchestra, which is resident in the renowned Kodály Centre in Pécs, Hungary.

www.intermusica.co.uk/artist/Gilbert-Varga

Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz

The Staatsphilharmonie was founded in 1919. In its inaugural years the orchestra attracted transregional attention under the baton of Richard Strauss, and subsequently principal conductors such as Christoph Eschenbach and Leif Segerstam have helped the orchestra to achieve international recognition. Michael Francis, who has been chief conductor since the 2019–20 season, has furthered the orchestra's eminence. With over 100 concerts per season, the Staatsphilharmonie brings music to the people. Performances at home and abroad as well as collaborations with internationally renowned conductors and soloists bear witness to the excellent reputation that the orchestra enjoys.

www.staatsphilharmonie.de

Stefan Malzew

For 13 years the German conductor and composer Stefan Malzew worked at the Mecklenburg State Theatre Schwerin and as general music director and chief conductor at the City Theatre, Giessen, also serving as chief conductor at the Neubrandenburg Philharmonic Orchestra from 2001 to 2015. His arrangements of songs for Ute Lemper resulted in a concert tour throughout the US, Canada and Europe, which also featured the Vogler Quartet. The subsequent album of the project was nominated for a GRAMMY Award. In 2015 Malzew founded his own company with the mission of developing the musical knowledge of children and adults of all ages.

www.stefanmalzew.de

Franck Ollu

French conductor Franck Ollu is a specialist in the fields of contemporary and French music. He has a particularly close relationship with Ensemble Modern, and has also recently worked with the Budapest Festival and Bayerische Rundfunk Orchestras. As a conductor of opera, he has given the world premiere performances of contemporary works including Oscar Bianchi's *Thanks to my Eyes*, and Pascal Dusapin's *Penthésiléa* and *Passion*. He conducted the first performance of George Benjamin's first opera *Into the Little Hill* at Opéra Bastille and *Written On Skin* at the Bolshoi Theatre.

www.askonasholt.com/artists/franck-ollu

Xiaogang Ye is regarded as one of today's leading Chinese composers, having won prestigious awards for his concert music and for numerous highly successful film scores. The works on this recording share a deep affection for the beauty and power of nature and landscape in China. *Mount E'mei* eulogises the great spectacle and cultural significance of the mountain, creating a multi-dimensional picture through the use of traditional instruments. *Lamura Cuo* and *The Silence of Mount Minshan* describe mystic atmosphere and melancholy silence, while *Scent of Green Mango* uses vibrant colours and shading to express gratitude for the fruit's refreshing fragrance.

RSNO SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL ORCHESTRA

XIAOGANG YE

(b. 1955)

DEUTSCHE STAATSPHILHARMONIE RHEINLAND-PFALZ

1 **Mount E'mei** for Violin, Percussion and Orchestra, Op. 74 **(峨嵋 – 为小提琴、打击乐与乐队而作)** (2015–16) **21:54**

2 **Scent of Green Mango** for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 42 **(青芒果香 – 为钢琴与乐队而作)** (1998–2014) **17:43**

3 **Lamura Cuo** for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 69b **(拉姆拉错 – 为小提琴与乐队而作)** (2014) **13:14**

4 **The Silence of Mount Minshan** for Strings, Op. 73 **(岷山无语 – 为弦乐队而作)** (2015) **10:48**

Wei Lu 1, Dan Zhu 3, Violin • Shengnan Hu, Percussion 1
Xiaotang Tan, Piano 2
Royal Scottish National Orchestra • Gilbert Varga 1
Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz 2–4
Stefan Malzew 2 4 • Franck Ollu 3

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